



MAMMAL SURVEY GROUP OF VICTORIA INC.

SURVEY CAMP REPORT

LOCATION/NAME *Cape Liptrap* **DATES** *8 March - 10 March 2014*

WEATHER: 8 March was fine with ENE moderate wind, temp 21 deg. 9 March early mist, ENE moderate wind, some cloud, mostly fine, 22 deg. Change to WNW and drop in wind overnight. 10 March sunny 24 deg. Light WNW breeze.

DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT SURVEYED. Include brief physical and botanical description, Modifying factors (fire, logging, grazing) geology if known, and any significant faunal or floristic observations.

The area surveyed was a private property on Cape Liptrap Road. The property is approx. 900 acres of largely untouched coastal heathland, except for a recently constructed gravel driveway transecting the property east to west, and terminating at a recently constructed dwelling amongst coastal tea tree on a cliff top to the far west. The land is elevated above sea level rising to 140 metres. The area surveyed was primarily flat with small undulations running north to south. To the west, the property culminated in sand dunes and cliffs dropping to a wide beach and the ocean.

Although the vegetation was coastal heathland, there were distinctive changes in dominant vegetation types as one proceeded from entry to the property off Cape Liptrap Road to the coast, that is, in an approximate east to west direction.

Near Cape Liptrap Road the predominant species of vegetation were: *Casuarina Paludosa*, *Banksia marginata*, *Bursaria spinosa*, *Leptospermum squarrosa*, *L. myrsinoides*, *L. juniperinum*, *Acacia Longifolia*, *Leucopogon parviflorus*, *Acacia suaveolens*, *Monotoca*, *Astroloma*, *Rapanea howittiana* and *Epacric impressa*, with sparse *Eucalyptus radiata* and *E. obliqua*, *Banksia integrifolia* and *Xanthorrhoea australis*. Along the driveway was a significant cover of bracken where Bush Rat was trapped. Away from the driveway the groundcover included grasses, and occasional coral fern amongst predominantly *Cas. Paludosa* and *Melaleuca squarrosa*, and although there were small mammal trails, no animals were trapped here on either night.

The next trapping site, 0.7km from Cape Liptrap Road, had *Euc. obliqua*, with *Lept. laevigatum*, *B. integrifolia*, *Mel. squarrosa*, *Mel. ericifolia*, *Persoonia juniperina*, bracken, *Xanthorrhoea australis*, *Solanum aviculare*, coral fern, sphagnum moss and maidenhair fern.

The third trapping site was 1.10 km into the property where there was a canopy layer of *B. integrifolia* with an understorey of *Rhagodia baccata*, *Coprosma quadrifida*, *Polyscias sambucifolia*, *Pomaderris oraria*, *Senecio* sp. and groundcovers of grasses, *Geranium* sp., *Tetragona*, *Acaena anserinifolia*, *Cassytha*, bracken and fallen logs.

From 1.7 km into the property the vegetation became predominantly *Leptospermum laevigatum* with *Acacia melanoxylon*, *Swainsona*, *Senecio* sp., *Casuarina Stricta*, *Platylobium obtusangulum*, *Atriplex cinerea*, *Goodenia ovata*, *Lomandra*, *viola*.

Conditions over the last few months had been mild. The area had experienced good rainfalls over the winter and spring, and a mild summer. Although some *Banksia marginata* and *Banksia integrifolia* held flowers, generally the banksias were not in full-flower.

Survey Report

Overall a total of 41 species were recorded during the survey; this consisted of 6 mammals (not including signs such as tracks and scats), 32 birds, 1 reptile and 2 amphibians. Refer to attached survey sheets for detailed results on mammals and birds.

Twenty three Bush Rats *Rattus fuscipes* were captured after 98 trap nights over two nights. Bush rats were captured in a range of vegetation types, but were absent in the low heath and tall Coast Banksia woodland. Most were captured in Coast Tea-tree scrub with a mix of other coastal tree species.



A healthy Bush Rat in a cage trap prior to being released
Note shortened tail possibly caused by fighting or predator



Typical Tea-tree scrub favoured by Bush Rats

Photos - Max Campbell

Bat traps were not utilised in the survey.

Trapping Summary

Species	Code	Count		Type of Trap				Total trapped
		night	day	Cage	Elliot	Box	Harp	
<i>Rattus fuscipes</i>	Q1408	23		23				23
Total number of captures		23		23				23
Total trap nights/days		98		98				98

Animals photographed by our remote sensing cameras include one Eastern Pygmy Possum and one Black Wallaby.



Two images of an Eastern Pygmy-possum edited from 3 seconds of a video recording

Two hours of spotlighting (2 spotlights in one hour over one night) revealed 9 Common Ringtail Possums, one Black Wallaby, one roosting White-throated Needletail, and a number of small bats.



White-throated Needletail Roosting
on top of Blackwood, a rare sight



Two of the nine Common Ringtail Possums detected by spotlight
Photos - Max Campbell

Incidental sightings include 3 Black Wallabies, 1 Red Fox, 3 Fallow Deer, and an unidentified medium-sized animal (possibly a rabbit or bandicoot). Signs of other mammal species present include Echidna diggings, Wombat holes and scats.



Beautiful Firetail



White-eared Honeyeater

Photos – Andrew McCutcheon

32 species of birds recorded, the most notable being single Beautiful Firetail and a roosting White throated Needletail. The latter was seen resting in a tree when spotlighting.

Other Fauna Species (Reptiles & Amphibians) Observed

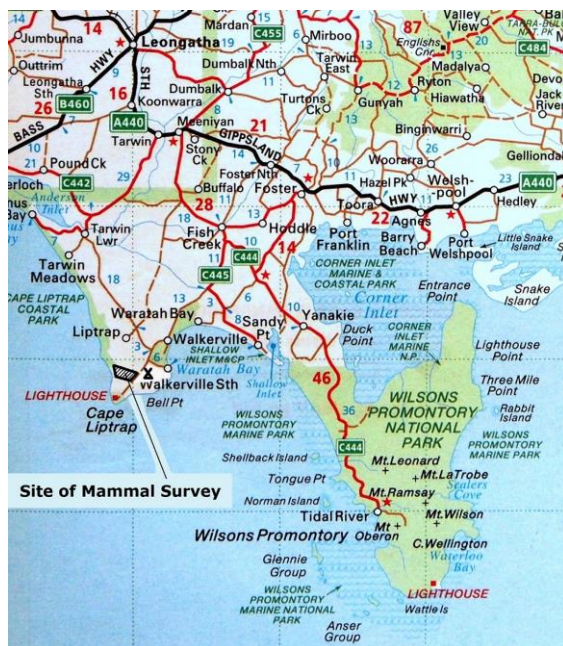
Only one reptile species a single Tiger Snake was seen, but there were Goanna tracks in the sand dunes below the house at the end of the road. Frogs heard include numerous Southern Tree Frogs *Litoria ewingii* and a small number of Common Froglets *Crinia signifera* in a dam.

Notable Findings and Observations

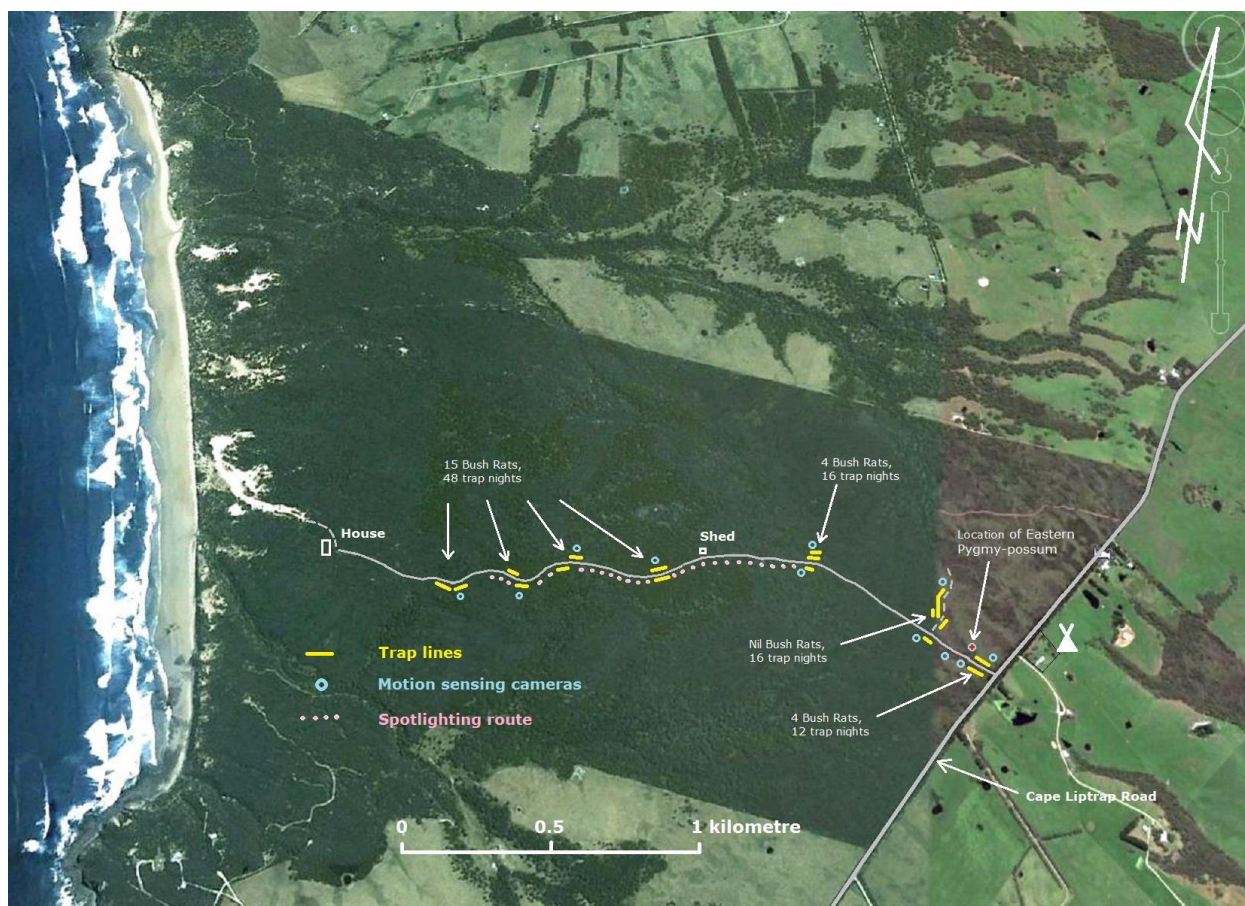
An Eastern Pigmy Possum was recorded by a motion sensing camera attached to a single low and spreading Messmate Eucalyptus oblique in low heathy scrub about 150 metres west of Cape Liptrap Road.

The White-throated Needletail detected while spotlighting is an unusual sighting as these birds rarely roost while visiting Australia during the summer months on their migration from Asia.

LOCATION MAP:



TRAPPING AND SPOTLIGHTING MAP



CAMP COMMANDANT: June Blenkhorn/Stahle

CAMP HOSTS: Richard Taylor

PERSONNEL

Andrew McCutcheon and Faye Chapman
Morwenna Griffiths, Tim Hunt, Josh and Inga Griffiths-Hunt
Max and Faye Campbell
Maureen Bond Philip Stahle

June Blenkhorn/Stahle – Mammal Survey Group of Victoria Inc.
WSIEAC Approval 22.11